CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/05853
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Consultation ends:	17th August 2023
Extended Target Date:	20th September 2023
Case officer:	James Repper

Site Address:	In-Excess, Netherhampton Road, Netherhampton, Salisbury, SP2 8PR
Proposal:	Retrospective permission for alterations & extension to existing toilets
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION:
The application site is an established Garden Centre dating back more than 30 years via different operators. The site is located outside of any settlement boundaries however the established retail use of the garden centre site is
connected to an essentially rural-based activity not normally found in town centres. The application site lies approximately 1 km to the west of the edge of the principal settlement of Salisbury as defined by the WCS and settlement boundary within the WHSAP 2020. The Local Service Centre of Wilton lies approximately 2.5 km to the northwest of the application site and the small settlement of Netherhampton, which does not have a settlement boundary, is approximately 400 metres to the west.

PROPOSAL:

This is a retrospective application seeking permission to legitimise changes made to the toilet blocks to create disabled toilet provision plus associated works.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:
PL/2021/10282 - Reconfiguration of existing garden centre to include: demolition of existing building, relocation of existing cafe/restaurant and formation of decked seating area, relocation of staff room, over cladding of existing buildings and structures (part retrospective) and extension of existing car parking area. – Approved subject to conditions May 2022

POLICIES:
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
National Design Guidance (Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places) 2019

Wiltshire Core Strategy:
Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
Core Policy 20: Salisbury Area Strategy
Core Policy 23: Southern Wiltshire Area Strategy
Core Policy 33: Wilton Area Strategy
Core Policy 35: Existing Employment Land
Core Policy 38: Retail and Leisure
Core Policy 48: Supporting Rural Life
Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Core Policy 57: Ensuring high quality design and place-shaping
Core Policy 62: Development Impacts on the Transport Network
Core Policy 64: Demand Management

Supplementary Planning Documents:
Creating Places Design Guide SPG (April 2006)

REPRESENTATIONS:

Netherhampton Parish Council – No Comment

Letters – None Received

ISSUES:
The main considerations which are material to the determination of this application are listed below:

- Principle
- Character & Design
- Neighbouring Amenities

PLANNING ASSESSMENT:

Principle:
Under the heading "Supporting a prosperous rural economy", paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that "Planning policies and decisions should enable:

a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

This proposal relates to an existing business which is located in a rural location due to its evolvement from a plant nursery, as such there is national policy support for its sustainable growth and expansion. It is noted that elsewhere in the NPPF there is a separate section under the heading of Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres which specifically relates to the location of retail development and given the emphasis elsewhere in the Framework to protecting and enhancing town centres. The intention of the NPPF is therefore not to encourage new town centre
retail and leisure uses in the countryside other than village, community and farm shops which are by necessity located in smaller settlements or the countryside, as reflected by Core Policy 48. The expansion of the business is therefore considered acceptable in principle provided that the range of goods and services remains within the scope of a garden centre.

Character & Design:
Core Policy 57 states that new development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality. Commercial extensions/alterations such as this are acceptable in principle subject to there being no adverse impacts.

Good design helps to provide a sense of place, creates or reinforces local distinctiveness, and promotes community cohesiveness and social wellbeing; The layout and design of new developments must also be based on a thorough understanding of the site itself and its wider context, and seek to maximise the benefits of the site's characteristics. This will require careful consideration of the site layout. No two sites share the same landscapes, contours, relationship with surrounding buildings, street pattern and features. The proximity of poor quality or indistinct development is not a justification for standard or poor design solutions. New development should integrate into its surroundings whilst seeking to enhance the overall character of the locality; A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings.

In this instance, it is considered that the completed works are located in the same provision as the previous toilet blocks and realistically make very little change to the external visage other than a level of modernisation and refurbishment. The addition of disabled facilities is considered to fulfil the request of the Equalities Act 2010 – Equality of Toilet Provision and should be applauded by the business. The minor changes to the visuals of the building in the context of the wider business are considered to be negligible and would be of no consequence to the street scene or the character of the wider area. Overall it is considered that the retrospectively applied for changes are of an acceptable scale, mass, height and design to maintain the character of the application site and would have no impact on the street scene or the character of the wider area.

Neighbouring Amenities:
WCS policy CP57 (Ensuring High Quality Design & Space Shaping) requires that development should ensure the impact on the amenities of existing occupants/neighbours is acceptable and ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself. The NPPF includes that planning should "*always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings"*. Residential amenity is affected by significant changes to the environment including privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and living areas within private gardens and this, therefore, needs to be carefully considered accordingly.

Due to the rural location of the site and lack of residential neighbours, it is considered that there is no effect on amenity space. The location of the new toilet block in place of the old toilet block maintains the status quo of the site and would have no effect on the commercial neighbours due to the large distances involved.

CONCLUSION:
The proposed reconfiguration of the toilet block is supported in principle on the basis that the primary use of the site remains as a garden centre.
Having considered the the visual impact of the works to the existing buildings and car parking it is concluded that the proposal would not introduce any harm to the character and appearance of the site or its setting. There are no other material considerations which would weigh against approval of the development subject to the conditions set out.

The proposal would, therefore, accord with the aims and objectives of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and other Government guidance and is recommended that planning permission be granted for the proposal.

RECOMMENDATION:
Approve subject to the following conditions

Conditions: (1)

1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Application Form & Certificate 20th July 2023
Plans Ref:
Location Plan plus Topo Survey DWG: 19168 22 Received 20th July 2023
Block Plan DWG: 19168 50A Received 20th July 2023
Proposed Elevations, Floorplans & Photos DWG: 19168 55A Received 20th July 2023

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.